

MCAA Members and Product Approval Agencies Have Important Dialog

Over 70 members of the Measurement, Control & Automation Association were on hand to talk with representatives of six Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories who are responsible for the testing and certification of their products for use in the marketplace including under standards addressing hazardous locations. The meeting (The Product Approval Process Summit) was held on May 20 immediately following the annual meeting of the Association in Tempe, AZ. MCAA members have told their Association that time delays and price increases have placed them at a competitive disadvantage around the world. The goal of the Summit was to bring the parties to the table to air the issues and to move the process forward.

The Summit was moderated by former industry executive, Edward J. Curry of the consulting firm of Curry & Hurd. Mr. Curry drew out from each side information about projects and processes that painted quite different pictures of the experience. The group identified issues particularly related to timeliness and cost which struck to the heart of the disconnect. Then both sides agreed to continue the dialog and to work together to try to resolve as many issues as possible through the use of further joint meetings. The Testing Labs represented were CSA, FM, Intertek, MET Labs, TUV Rheinland and UL. The NRTL program is monitored by the Department of Commerce whose representative, Indrek Grabbi (who oversees the instrumentation segment in DOC), also attended the meeting as an observer.

The first task for the group going forward will be to provide some examples of fact (based on project type, completion dates and cost) that can put some specifics on the issues. Other discussions are likely to take place with insurance underwriters and with customers to help educate both groups on the interchangeability of NRTL certifications. Members talked about moving toward a harmonized set of submission criteria, common process for issue escalation and a common set of languages/terminology. A National Mark and a matrix timetable for certification were other ideas that were generated by the MCAA members.

An MCAA committee will be established later this summer to begin the process of addressing these issues and pulling together a cohesive program that will involve both members and the executives from the testing labs to help make the process work better for everyone.

MCAA exists to help the management teams of process and factory automation product and solution providers run and grow successful businesses by offering timely, unique and highly specialized resources acquired from shared management benchmarks and strategies—like industry meetings. For more information, visit the website at www.measure.org or contact MCAA at mcaa@measure.org or 757-258-3100.



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